

## THE BIBLE ANSWERS

*Short Questions*

## FROM OUR READERS

In February my children in school will be confronted with St. Valentine's Day. What should I tell them to do?

Few know where the custom of celebrating St. Valentine's Day originated. We do not find any such practice in the Bible. How did we come to inherit these customs?

It is time we examined why children are encouraged to celebrate St. Valentine's Day when it is never so much as mentioned in the Bible or as a practice of the New Testament Church.

Did you know that centuries before Christ, the pagan Romans celebrated February 15 and the evening of February 14 as an idolatrous festival in honor of Lupercus, the "hunter of wolves"? The Romans called the festival the "Lupercalia." The custom of exchanging valentines and all the other traditions in honor of Lupercus—the deified hero-hunter of Rome—"have been handed down from the Roman festival of the Lupercalia, celebrated in the month of February, when names of young women were put into a box and drawn out by men as chance directed," admits the *Encyclopedia Americana*, art., "St. Valentine's Day."

When Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire there was some talk in church circles of discarding this pagan free-for-all. But the Roman citizens wouldn't hear of it! So it was agreed that the holiday would continue as it was.

But how did this pagan festival acquire the name of "St. Valentine's Day"? And why do little children and young people still cut out hearts and send them

on a day in honor of Lupercus the hunter of wolves?

Valentine was a common Roman name. Roman parents often gave the name to their children in honor of the famous man who was first called Valentine in antiquity. That famous man was Lupercus, the hunter. But who was Lupercus?

The Greeks called Lupercus by the name of "Pan"—the Semites called Pan "Baal," according to the *Classical Dictionaries*. Baal—mentioned so often in the Bible—was merely another name for Nimrod, the mighty hunter" (Genesis 10:9). So the hunter Nimrod was the Lupercus—or wolf hunter—of the Romans. And St. Valentine's Day was a day set aside by the pagans in his honor!

But why should Nimrod have been called "Valentine" by the Romans?

Valentine comes from the Latin word *Valentinus*, a proper name derived from the word *valens*, meaning "to be strong," declares *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*. It means literally "strong, powerful, mighty." We read in the Bible that Nimrod was the "MIGHTY hunter" (Gen. 10:9). *Nimrod was their hero—their strong man—their VALENTINE!*

It is time we teach our children to quit this Roman and Babylonian foolishness—this *idolatry*—and get back to the faith of Christ delivered once for all time. Let's quit teaching our children these pagan customs in memory of Baal the sungod—the original St. Valentine—and teach them instead what the Bible really says! And be sure to write for a complete article on the origin of St. Valentine's Day.